

# Courier

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County Executive's report to the Board of Supervisors

## Fairfax County prepares

We've all seen and heard the results of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and perhaps had friends, family or co-workers who experienced firsthand the devastation of these two storms – results that were more than the catastrophic damage to property. These storms

brought to the attention of the nation the importance of being prepared, leading many to ask, "How prepared are we in Fairfax County to deal with emergency situations?"

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on Oct. 17, County Executive **Tony Griffin**

gave a report, "Fairfax County: State of Emergency Planning and Preparedness," that provided a comprehensive analysis of the county's preparedness.

Although some of the county's current initiatives emanated from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Griffin pointed out that the county's plans are

*See Preparedness, page 2*



County Executive Tony Griffin briefs the Board of Supervisors.

## County to hold Career Fair Nov. 5

"Come for a job, stay for a career." This is the theme of Fairfax County's Career Fair scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

The job fair will provide potential job seekers with information about working for Fairfax County – the types of jobs that are available, requirements for getting a

job and benefit information. Attendees can learn how to find and apply for jobs using the county AIMS, or Automated Information Management System. Representatives from various county agencies also will be on hand to answer questions and talk about available jobs.

"Never before has Fairfax County offered such an extensive career fair for county

*See Career Fair, page 3*

**Emergency Alert Network**  
<http://infoweb/emergency/ean>

### *Preparedness, from page 1*

not just centered on terrorism. "The county must be prepared for any type of emergency situation," he said, noting the county's close proximity to the nation's capital and many targets of interest in this area.

"The county uses an 'all hazards'

approach to emergency management which means we must be prepared for everything from severe weather events to terrorist attacks to traffic interruptions," he said.

The county created the Office of Emergency Management, now a separate operating department, with the day-to-day responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating county preparedness. Headed by **Doug Bass**, the emergency management coordinator, the

***"I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being prepared."***

department brings together agency resources to meet local and regional emergency needs, as required, and manages the Alternate Emergency Operations Center, the county's nerve center in times of emergency.

But it's not just available agency resources that are important in the event of an emergency. The interaction and coordination of these resources and associated information become critical in emergency situations. Griffin explained how numerous coordinating entities are in place with defined responsibilities to ensure appropriate responses are made. One such example is the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee, chaired by Deputy

County Executive **Rob Stalzer**, to coordinate the efforts of county public safety agencies and other operating departments, public schools, Fairfax Water, and additional county and regional organizations. Other coordinating committees are in place that meet regularly to address emergency and homeland security issues. This includes working with regional, state and national organizations.

Critical in any developing emergency situation is the need for good information.

The Community Emergency Alert Network allows those with e-mail, cell phones and pagers to get immediate notifications. The Emergency Alert Network is the county's internal notification system. Channel 16, the county Web site and commercial media are other sources for

getting updated information. "The county works with the media daily and maintains plans for disseminating information to media and operational sources," Griffin said. He also emphasized the continued importance and reliability of face-to-face communications.

One area questioned lately because of the hurricanes' impact is the county's evacuation plans. "It is unlikely there will be a major evacuation in Fairfax County and our policy is to encourage residents to stay put unless told otherwise," Griffin said. However, he said that public safety agencies are prepared to respond, if necessary, to three scenarios – selected evacuation, staged evacuation and full-scale evacuation.

Griffin also encouraged employees and residents to develop their own personal preparedness plans and pointed out that emergency planning should include pets. Employees should keep emergency supplies in their offices and agencies should ensure that shelter-in-place supplies are up to date, as well as their continuity of operations plans. Instructions for building emergency supply kits are at [www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org](http://www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org).

Griffin's report contained other examples of county planning that will ensure proper responses to emergency situations. He also cited areas where work is still needed and concluded his presentation with a proposed plan of action.

"I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being prepared. I want our residents to know that when bad things happen, the county will respond and work 24/7 until we have resolved the situation," he said. "I'm proud of the dedication and commitment of county employees who provide the necessary support to our residents during times of need." ■

Griffin's report focused on six areas relating to the county's emergency preparedness:

- ♦ Progress the county has made since Sept. 11, 2001.
- ♦ Overview of the county's emergency management response and who is in charge during an incident.
- ♦ Evacuation planning.
- ♦ The needs of special populations.
- ♦ Communicating with residents and employees.
- ♦ A future action plan.

**The complete presentation is on the county Web site at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/planning\\_and\\_preparedness.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/planning_and_preparedness.pdf).**

**Career Fair, from page 1**

agencies and schools," said **Peter Schroth**, director of the Fairfax County Department of Human Resources. "We have put together an event that will help job applicants see how their skills match up with the county's workforce needs. There will be representatives from more than 20 county agencies and the Fairfax County Public Schools to further explain job needs in their areas."

In addition to learning about working for the county and speaking firsthand with agency representatives, the event will include workshops that will explain how to apply for a county job — from developing and tailoring a resume to using the county's automated application system. "AIMS is a convenient Internet-based system that lets people identify and apply for county jobs they are interested in and qualified for," said **Rita Kayn**, manager of HR Central, the county's customer service/application center. People who do not have a computer or Internet access will learn how they can use computer systems at public libraries or special CRiS

kiosks throughout the area to access AIMS and apply for jobs.

"Fairfax County is a great place to live and work," said **Gerald E. Connolly**, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "Our county government employees are top-notch, providing excellent services and support that our residents have come to expect and appreciate."

**Tony Griffin**, county executive, agreed with Connolly, adding, "Fairfax County is continually recognized as being one of the best managed local governments in the nation because of the county workforce. Serving more than one million residents in one of the largest counties in the country, Fairfax County government has a variety of jobs in different fields with good benefits and an enjoyable working environment for those qualified and dedicated to outstanding public service."

For more information on the Fairfax County Career Fair, go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/jobs/jobs.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/jobs/jobs.htm) or call HR Central at 703-324-3311, TTY 703-222-7314. ■

**"Come for a job,  
stay for a career"**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/  
jobs/jobs.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/jobs/jobs.htm)

## Protect yourself from the flu

Flu season runs from October until April. According to the Health Department, you can help protect yourself by getting a flu shot (no vaccine shortage is anticipated this year) and simply washing your hands. People in high priority categories (over 65 or with special medical conditions) are urged to get a flu shot and can get one through the Health Department.

Even if you do get a flu shot, you still need to remain vigilant about preventing the spread of germs. The easiest thing you can do to prevent the spread of flu and many other illnesses is to wash your hands thoroughly and frequently throughout the day with soap and warm water. Another important and very easy action is to cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper sleeve (not your hands!). And remember also to teach your children how to take these very simple steps.

Visit the Health Department's Web page at

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu) for the latest

information about the 2005/06 flu season, including information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about flu shots. You can also view and download the Health Department's educational materials, including the newest "Wash Your Hands" instruction sign available in English and Spanish.

If your office would like to display the "It's Flu Season" and "Wash Your Hands" posters, please request these free materials by calling the Health Department at 703-246-2411, TTY 703-591-6435. ■

### Help prevent the spread of flu and many other illnesses by:

- ◆ Covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and immediately discarding the tissue.
- ◆ Sneezing and coughing into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- ◆ Washing your hands frequently throughout the day.
- ◆ Washing hands by scrubbing together for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.
- ◆ Staying home if you develop symptoms such as fever, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, headache and body aches.



## Millennium Forum

# Domestic Violence: Workplace Issues

"This is not an easy topic for most of us," said Dr. **Sujata Warriar**, who directs the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. "But domestic violence affects the workplace ... What affects the employee, affects the employer." Warriar told the Oct. 12 Millennium Forum audience that domestic violence impacts the work environment through employee absenteeism, inability to focus, low productivity and workplace disruption caused by abusers stalking victims at work. In addition, employers absorb a large portion of the \$4.1 billion in annual health care costs related to domestic violence

against women, who are most often the victims.

There are many things county employees can do to address the issue. Agencies should develop a simple personnel policy that will help maintain a safe workplace and educate co-workers on how to interact with an employee who may be abused. These policies should focus on victim safety, and may involve helping survivors of abuse negotiate a work plan or change the location of their work sites to minimize surprise attacks by abusers.

Society has a tendency to blame the victims, Warriar believes. Courts sometimes penalize women who have requested restraining orders and then return to their homes. "It often takes six to eight attempts for the average survivor to successfully leave an abuser," Warriar says. Financial issues are one reason victims stay, and employers who help ensure job security can assist.

When approaching a suspected victim of domestic abuse, Warriar suggests avoiding general yes or no questions, such as "Are you being abused?" She also advises individuals to avoid asking "why" questions that might stigmatize the victim. Also, understand that a victim has the right not to answer. Make sure that any efforts to help will not escalate the danger of the situation and will keep the environment as safe as possible for the victim. For details about interacting with victims of abuse, see Warriar's PowerPoint presentation on the Millennium Forum Web site at <http://infoweb/mfs>.

Warriar stressed that "If you approach a victim of abuse, you better know what the resources in your community and organization are." She praised Fairfax County for such resources as the Employee Assistance Program, a confidential counseling program free to all merit county employees. "You guys are way ahead of the curve," she said.

The next Millennium Forum is scheduled for Jan. 18, 2006. Dr. **Robert Templin Jr.**, president of the Northern Virginia Community College, will discuss "The Impact of the Immigrant Population on Workforce Development in Fairfax County."

To borrow a videotape of past Millennium Forum presentations, call the Employee Lending Library for Video Instructional Services at 703-324-8318, TTY 703-324-8365, or e-mail [John.Kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:John.Kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov). For more information about the series, visit <http://infoweb/mfs>. ■

— by Pat Bangs, Fairfax County Public Library



Dr. Sujata Warriar

## Uniformed Retirement System Board of Trustees Election Results

Second Lieutenant **Chuck Formeck**, Office of the Sheriff, was re-elected to the Uniformed Retirement System Board of Trustees. He was nominated to run for the position, along with PFC **Arthur Leeper**, also of the Office of the Sheriff. The election for the Board of Trustees position was held Oct. 3-6. Lieutenant Formeck's term of office will be from Nov. 1, 2005, until Oct. 31, 2009.

The Uniformed Retirement System is one of three county retirement systems. Members of the Board of Trustees have fiduciary responsibility for management of their system, including the investment of system assets, currently over \$700 million. The county retirement systems have general administration, managing billions of dollars of assets, and ensuring the prompt and accurate payment of retirement benefits for employees. ■



# Board of Supervisors approves retiree subsidy increase for 2006

The Board of Supervisors recently approved an increase to the retiree health subsidy for calendar year 2006. The increase, along with a standardization of the subsidy, comes in conjunction with the federal government's introduction of Medicare's new "Part D" prescription drug benefit, which takes effect on Jan. 1, 2006.

To encourage employer plans to continue providing pharmacy benefits to their retirees, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will provide a rebate to employers who retain retiree pharmacy benefits. The rebate will be provided for each retiree who does not enroll in Medicare Part D. In recognition of this expected rebate, the board approved the increase to the retiree health care subsidy for calendar year 2006 only.

The board has taken this short-term action to help reduce retiree health care costs while staff continues to monitor the new Medicare Part D health care plans that are being introduced. A longer-term strategy will be developed during the coming months.

Medicare's open enrollment for its first year of prescription drug coverage, which has an average premium of \$37 per month, will run from Nov. 15, 2005, to May 15, 2006. Medicare-eligible employees, retirees and depen-

dents who are covered by the county's health plan must decide whether they will enroll in Medicare Part D during this period.

However, participants need to be aware that the county's plan provides benefits that are as good as or better than those provided by Medicare Part D, and, for most Medicare-eligible employees and dependents, Medicare Part D will

only pay on a secondary basis after the county's plan pays for prescription drugs. Therefore, Medicare-eligible employees, retirees and dependents will need to carefully evaluate whether

enrolling in a Medicare Part D plan will provide any added value in paying for their prescription drugs. More information on the Medicare Part D benefit is available at the CMS website, [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov). ■

## Remember to enroll online by Nov. 14!

- Open enrollment runs from Oct. 14 to Nov. 14.
- Use the Benelogic online enrollment system at [www.fairfaxcountybenefits.benelogic.com](http://www.fairfaxcountybenefits.benelogic.com) to review or change your elections.
- To access the system, enter your PRISM ID and password (the last 4 digits of your Social Security number).
- You must re-set your password upon entering the system.
- No action is required to maintain your current elections for health, dental, life and LTD.
- You must re-enroll in the medical and dependent care flexible spending accounts to continue participating in 2006.

## Retiree Subsidy Amounts for 2006

### Monthly Subsidy for Retirees Ages 55-64

Years of Service at Retirement	Subsidy Amount	2006 Supplement	2006 Subsidy Amount
5-9	\$25	\$5	\$30
10-14	\$50	\$15	\$65
15-19	\$125	\$30	\$155
20-24	\$150	\$40	\$190
25 or more*	\$175	\$45	\$220

\*Also includes retirees of any age who are approved for a service-connected disability retirement and covered under a county health plan.

### Monthly Subsidy for Retirees Age 65 and Over

Years of Service at Retirement	Subsidy Amount	2006 Supplement	2006 Subsidy Amount
5-9	\$15	\$15	\$30
10-14	\$25	\$40	\$65
15-19	\$100	\$55	\$155
20-24	\$150	\$40	\$190
25 or more*	\$175	\$45	\$220

\*Also includes retirees of any age who are approved for a service-connected disability retirement and covered under a county health plan.

Employee  
Focus

## It's all about roses

Retirement often means "It's time to stop and smell the roses." Today is the day that **Peggy Van Lowe** retires after working for Fairfax County since 1983 when she began in the county's old Office of Research and Statistics. Prior to that, she worked for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. During her 22 years with the county, Peggy has blended her background in human services and her expertise in technology to make her a valuable member of the Department of Information Technology.

Peggy retires from her dual-hatted position as Division Director of Business Systems and Architecture/Administration. "I've really enjoyed my work here," she said, pointing out that while not a programmer, her project management/system management work lets her "see the big picture of where a project is going."

Peggy started working on a health care system for the Community Services Board "some of the old-timers around here may remember" called FINICS (referred to as Phoenix). "This program was written in a

language called MUMPS," she laughed.

While Peggy was born in Virginia, she spent most of her growing years in New York state. She graduated from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh where she received undergraduate and graduate degrees. She returned to Northern Virginia when her husband was transferred to this area. She and her husband have three grown children, the youngest, 20, has grown up with special needs. This latter situation led Peggy and her husband into projects and programs for special needs children. For the last 10 years, they have been strong supporters and participants in the Special Olympics.

So what does Peggy plan to do with all her free time after she retires? "I don't expect to have a lot of free time," she smiled. She will receive another graduate degree soon from George Mason University in special education and then plans to teach and work in special education programs. "I hope to use my experience in application/program management to solve some of the pressing needs in special education," she said.

When Peggy Van Lowe retires, she won't just go smell the roses...she'll grow them! ■



Peggy Van Lowe

## Guess who won?

For the third consecutive year, and the fourth time in five years, the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office won the fastest airplane pull award, beating 43 other teams at the 13th Annual Dulles Day Festival on Oct. 1. Each team entered in the plane pull event paid a \$1,000 registration fee, with all proceeds going to Special Olympics. Over the last thirteen years the Plane Pull has raised almost one million dollars for Special Olympics Virginia.

The twenty-man team from the Sheriff's Office pulled the 150,000 pound

aircraft in 5.68 seconds, easily beating the second best time, which was posted by the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office.

Aramark, an international food service company, sponsored the Sheriff's Office team. Aramark provides food service for the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. ■



Sheriff's Office  
winning team.  
(photos by  
Sheriff's Office)





## Briefs

**America Recycles Day Contest**

The America Recycles Day organization is sponsoring the 2005 pledge drive campaign. There are great national and regional prizes, plus the Employee Recycling Committee is having its own prize for county employees who pledge to recycle. For more information, visit the Employee Recycling Committee Infoweb page at <http://infoweb/dpwes/msw/erc.htm> or contact **Marion Plummer** at 703-324-5451, TTY 711. The deadline for pledge submissions is Nov. 1.

**Delta Dental Coverage Booklets Mailed**

Employees enrolled in dental coverage should receive booklets in their home mail from Delta Dental. The booklet provides detailed information about your Delta Dental coverage, including covered procedures, plan limitations and what you pay for various services.

Delta Dental's coverage will remain the same for 2006 although rates change. Employees who are not currently enrolled in Delta Dental coverage and who are interested in learning more about it can review the booklet on the County's

## Briefs

Infoweb at <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>.

If you are enrolled in the Delta Dental plan and did not receive a booklet, call Delta Dental at 1-800-237-6060. If you wish to enroll in the Delta Dental plan, you must enroll online through the Benelogic online enrollment system at [www.fairfaxcountybenefits.benelogic.com](http://www.fairfaxcountybenefits.benelogic.com).

**Volunteers Needed for Tree and Shrub Planting**

Volunteers are needed to plant native trees and shrubs at various designated sites throughout the county. Planting events are scheduled for Oct. 29, Nov. 5 and Nov. 13. Plants and instruction will be provided. Find out more by visiting the Stormwater Management Web page at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/riparianbuffer/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/riparianbuffer/). To volunteer, contact **Krystal Kearns** at 703-324-5821, TTY 711.

**Win \$200**

The Employee Advisory Council is sponsoring a logo/motto contest for all county employees. Entries should reflect the values, vision and mission of the EAC (see *Courier*, July 22) and must include name, phone, work location and job title. The deadline

## Briefs

is Nov. 18. Submit entries or questions to EAC chair **Anita Baker**, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite #836, Fairfax, VA 22035.

**Adult Day Health Care Employee of the Year**

**Shinkai Shahnann-Naderi** has been selected as the 2005 Adult Day

Health Care Employee of the Year by the Health Department. As the office manager at the Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center for the past eight and a half years, she has established a

new office and record-keeping system, helped revise the Program Management Indicator Report and serves on the Process Action Team. According to her plaque, Shahnann-Naderi is a "conscientious, creative and dedicated employee committed to excellence." Congratulations! ■



**Shinkai Shahnann-Naderi**

**Serving as voting officers**

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County employees can once again receive administrative leave for serving as election officers in the general election on Nov. 8. "Election officers are needed in all the 224 precincts in Fairfax County, including here in the Government Center. County employees are a great source of help in elections," said **Margaret Luca**, Electoral Board secretary. Employees who are interested in being election officers must have their supervisor's approval and be a registered voter in Virginia. Election officers also receive \$100 for their full day's work.

Each election officer must attend a one-time training class. Chief and assistant chief election officers are required to attend training prior to every election in which they serve. County employees can attend special training classes on Wednesday, Nov. 2, 4:30 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 5, 9 a.m., in Room 315 at the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

For complete voting information, including election officer requirements, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb/homepage.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb/homepage.htm) or call the Electoral Board at 703-324-4735, TTY 711. ■



FCCCC kickoff brings out supporters headed by Merni Fitzgerald (l), FCCCC county chair.

## FCCCC kicks off campaign

The Fairfax County Combined Charitable Campaign kicked off the 2005 drive with exhibits from local charities and speeches by county leaders. Verifying the value of charitable support was **Denise Anderson** whose family lost everything in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She expressed her appreciation to Fairfax County for the assistance she and her family have been given.

Plan to give to this year's campaign. See your agency representative. ■

## Employee evaluation form to change

Each year, the county has evaluated the pay for performance management system to determine what works well and what can be improved. Past changes include expanding the performance award scale from four levels to 12; training to improve performance feedback and communication between supervisors and employees; and changing the scoring methodology and performance award amounts.

Recently, the Employees Advisory Council recommended a fifth rating level, "In Development," to be added to evaluation forms in fiscal year 2007 (effective June 24, 2006; pay period 14). Research indicates that supervisors are sometimes reluctant to rate an employee as unsatisfactory on a performance element or behavior as this may imply that the employee has not performed satisfactorily at all during the review period. There are situations where the employee is making progress toward meeting performance expectations but has not quite mastered the requirements and therefore would merit the new In Development rating.

The description for this rating level (located between unsatisfactory and fully proficient) will be universal for behaviors, performance elements and goals, and will read, "Performance skills did not consistently meet job

**"In Development" level will be added to performance evaluation forms in 2006.**

requirements for this behavior/performance element/goal. Employee shows potential for improvement with added effort and additional guidance and/or training."

Scoring methodology will remain unchanged for the four existing rating levels. This ensures that the addition of the fifth rating level will not affect scoring beyond the intent to provide rating flexibility when an employee has not fully met expectations to be rated fully proficient, but where progress is being made toward meeting those expectations. Therefore, if an employee receives the same ratings in FY 2007 that he or she received in FY 2006, the final rating will not change.

Another area of review is the pay award scale. Many feel that the perfor-

mance award scale does not provide a meaningful pay increase for employees who receive an overall fully proficient rating (250 points, 1.7 percent pay award). Any recommended changes will be included in the advertised

budget for FY 2007. There is no plan to change the overall pay award range of 0 to 6 percent.

The revised evaluation form template including the fifth rating level is on the HR Infoweb page. Any questions on the new rating for FY 2007 may be directed to the Employee Relations Division at 703-324-3495, TTY 711. ■

*Courier* is published each payday Friday. The deadline for articles and notices is two weeks before publication.

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